

**Sanpete County Economic Development
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October 21, 2003

Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket 34075
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20423-0001

STB Finance Docket No. 34075—Environmental Comments
Six County Association of Governments—Construction and
Operation Exemption-Rail Line Between Levan and Salina, Utah

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Sanpete County Office of Economic Development and its Advisory Board hereby expresses its full support for the Central Utah Rail Project.

Sanpete County sits in a valley that has neither rail or freeway access. The lack of these transportation options severely limits the type of manufacturing firms who choose to do business here. We have received news that one of the larger employers in the area is closing a coal mine and we will be losing about 150 jobs. In addition to those jobs, we have had layoffs of another 65-75 workers in two manufacturing plants. These jobs losses are due mainly to the national economy. We need to find replacement jobs and in order to help find those jobs we need rail transportation.

The unemployment rate in Sanpete County is higher and the per capita income level lower than almost the whole state of Utah. We are ranked 28th out of 29 counties for low income and high unemployment.

We feel that having rail access in the valley would improve the economic picture in the Sanpete Valley. The preferred route through our county would provide rail access but not disrupt the landowners generally.

Another important issue with the rail project is the ability to remove the 700-800 trucks a day that travel through the middle of the Gunnison Valley and two towns along the highway. These trucks are a hazard on the two lane highway that exists in that area. Cars trying to pass these trucks

create a dangerous problem.

We urge you to make your decision quickly so that we can move ahead with the rail project and the new economic development possibilities that it would provide.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further information about Sanpete County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally East". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the word "East".

Sally East

Sanpete County Economic Development Director